

GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM

Friday, August 11, 2006

Hello, this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

For Michigan to succeed in a global economy, we must change the way we think about education.

Not that long ago, you could go from a Michigan high school to the assembly line at the local plant – and find a good paying manufacturing job.

But in today's global economy, education beyond high school is the key to success – both for Michigan's citizens and for Michigan's economy.

To make higher education a reality for every child in Michigan, we have to do three things.

First, invest in our schools, our public education system. That's why, despite record budget shortfalls over the past three years, I have continued to fight for additional investment – pushing education funding to record levels in Michigan.

Second, every child must be prepared for higher education when they graduate from high school ... and we are well on our way.

Two years ago we required a high-level curriculum for our students in grades K-8 to ensure that not only were the kids learning the skills they needed, but that every child, regardless of where they lived in Michigan, is learning the same high-level skills.

This year, I called for, and was proud to sign into law, new high school curriculum standards – among the toughest in the nation – to ensure that students are taking the math, the science, and the English that they need to compete.

The third thing we have to do to help families to get their children to go beyond high school is that we must ensure that college is affordable for every child in Michigan. That's why I've proposed a new \$4,000 scholarship for every student in Michigan regardless of whether they've passed a standardized test.

That amount is enough to pay for a two year degree at a Michigan community college that can lead to good-paying jobs in dozens of fields.

Or that \$4,000 can be used at any of our colleges and universities. Or it can be used to pay for career and technical training.

The Merit Award scholarship we have in Michigan today only goes to less than half our high school students based upon a standardized test.

When it comes to helping our kids get the education they need, even batting 500 is not good enough.

If we expect them all to get education or training after high school, we've got to help all of them pay for it. It is that simple.

Next week, my office will send to every school district in Michigan an analysis of this new scholarship proposal. A proposal that makes a promise to every Michigan family that we will help your children go beyond high school.

And in the coming weeks, I will continue to push the legislature to pass my plan and provide every child with that \$4,000 scholarship.

Because when the school doors open this fall, every student who enters should know that we believe in their abilities and that we will do everything in our power to help them succeed.

Thank you for listening.